

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented) A method of producing a plant tolerant to stress conditions comprising the steps of

- (a) providing plant cells with a chimeric gene to create transgenic plant cells, said chimeric gene comprising the following operably linked DNA fragments
 - (i) a plant-expressible promoter;
 - (ii) a DNA region, which when transcribed yields an ParG inhibitory RNA molecule;
 - (iii) a 3' end region involved in transcription termination and polyadenylation;
- (b) regenerating a population of transgenic plant lines from said transgenic plant cell; and
- (c) identifying a stress tolerant plant line within said population of transgenic plant lines.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said parG ParG inhibitory RNA molecule comprises a sense nucleotide sequence of at least 20 consecutive nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence of the ParG gene present in said plant cell.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said parG ParG inhibitory RNA molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence of at least 20 consecutive nucleotides of the complement of the nucleotide sequence of the ParG gene present in said plant cell.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said chimeric gene further comprises a DNA region encoding a self-splicing ribozyme between said DNA region coding for said parG ParG inhibitory RNA molecule and said 3' end region.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 2 [[1]], wherein said parG ParG inhibitory RNA further comprises a sense region comprising a nucleotide sequence of at least 20 consecutive nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence of the ParG gene present in said plant cell and an antisense region comprising a nucleotide sequence of at least 20 consecutive nucleotides of the complement of the nucleotide sequence of the ParG gene present in said plant cell,

wherein said sense and antisense ~~region~~ nucleotide sequence are capable of forming a double stranded RNA region comprising said at least 20 consecutive nucleotides.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said stress conditions are heat, drought, nutrient depletion, oxidative stress or high light conditions.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, comprising further crossing said transgenic plant line with another plant line to obtain stress tolerant progeny plants.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended) A method of producing a plant tolerant to stress conditions comprising the steps of:

- (a) isolating a DNA fragment of at least 100 bp comprising a part of the ~~parG~~ ParG encoding gene of said plant;
- (b) producing a chimeric gene by operably linking the following DNA fragments;
 - (i) a plant expressible promoter region;
 - (ii) said isolated DNA fragment comprising part of the ~~parG~~ ParG encoding gene of said plant in direct orientation compared to the promoter region;
 - (iii) said isolated DNA fragment comprising part of the ~~parG~~ ParG encoding gene of said plant in inverted orientation compared to the promoter region;
 - (iv) a 3' end region involved in transcription termination and polyadenylation;
- (c) providing plant cells with said chimeric gene to create transgenic plant cells;
- (d) regenerating a population of transgenic plant lines from said transgenic plant cell; and
- (e) identifying a stress tolerant plant line within said population of transgenic plant lines.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented) A DNA molecule comprising

- (i) a plant-expressible promoter;
- (ii) a DNA region, which when transcribed yields a ParG inhibitory RNA molecule; and
- (iii) a 3' end region involved in transcription termination and polyadenylation.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended) The DNA molecule according to claim 9, wherein said DNA region comprises a nucleotide sequence of at least 21 to 100 nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence

encoding a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of ~~SEQ ID No~~ SEQ ID NO: 1, 2, or 16 or at least 21 to 100 nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO:~~ 3, 4, 15, or 23.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended) A plant cell comprising the DNA molecule of any one of claims 9, [[or]] 10, 20, or 21.

Claim 12 (Original) A plant consisting essentially of the plant cells of claim 11.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented) A process for producing stress tolerant plants, comprising the step of crossing a plant of claim 12 with another plant.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented) Seeds and propagating material of a plant according to claim 12.

Claim 15 (Original) Plants obtainable or obtained by the process of claim 8.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended) A method of producing a plant tolerant to stress conditions comprising the steps of

- (a) providing plant cells with a chimeric gene to create transgenic plant cells, said chimeric gene comprising the following operably linked DNA fragments
 - (i) a plant-expressible promoter;
 - (ii) a DNA region, which when transcribed yields an ParG inhibitory RNA molecule, said DNA region comprising a nucleotide sequence of at least 21 to 100 nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence encoding a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of ~~SEQ ID [[No]] NO:~~ 1, 2, or 16 or at least 21 to 100 nucleotides of a nucleotide sequence of ~~SEQ ID NO:~~ 3, 4, 15, or 23;
 - (iii) a 3' end region involved in transcription termination and polyadenylation;
- (b) regenerating a population of transgenic plant lines from said transgenic plant cell; and
- (c) identifying a stress tolerant plant line within said population of transgenic plant lines.

Claims 17-19 (Canceled)

Claim 20 (New) The DNA molecule according to claim 9, wherein said ParG inhibitory RNA molecule comprises a sense nucleotide sequence of at least 20 consecutive nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence of the ParG gene present in said plant cell.

Claim 21 (New) The DNA molecule according to claim 20, wherein said ParG inhibitory RNA further comprises an antisense nucleotide sequence of at least 20 consecutive nucleotides of the complement of the nucleotide sequence of the ParG gene present in said plant cell and wherein said sense and antisense nucleotide sequence are capable of forming a double stranded RNA region comprising said at least 20 consecutive nucleotides.